

October 2022

# Boomers, Elders, & More E-Newsletter

Monthly Elder Care Newsletter of the Vanderbilt Child & Family Center



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## ***A Message from the Wellbeing Manager***

I am writing to share some exciting news regarding the Vanderbilt Child and Family Center and the Elder Care program. Many changes are underway that will lead to opportunities for expansion and the provision of greater resources for the Vanderbilt community.

It is bittersweet for me to share that I am impacted by the changes ahead. As of October 3<sup>rd</sup>, I will no longer continue the responsibilities of facilitating the caregiver support or the learning sessions. I will be using my talents full-time in the [Office of Health and Wellness](#). I am delighted to make this change as it allows me to fully utilize my Social Work background.



With this change comes a wonderful opportunity to fulfill the growing needs of our university. I am happy share that Ms. Jenny Main will be taking on the role of Vanderbilt Child & Family Center Elder Care Intern. She will be supporting events and activities, including Elder Care support and resources.

I want you all to know what a privilege and honor it has been to serve you. I have appreciated getting to know so many of you, hearing your stories, and sharing the joys and challenges of the caregiving journey. I will miss you all dearly.

All the Best!  
Stacey

# Benefits of Walking Daily for Aging Adults

According to Harvard Medical School, walking for 2.5 hours a week can reduce the risk of heart disease risk by 30 percent. But the question is, why is walking so good for our health, especially for seniors? The answer is multi-faceted with numerous benefits. Below we explain why active adults should walk daily for optimal health.



## Easily Accessible

No gym membership is required! Walking is free and one of the simplest and easiest ways to get healthy because it's easily accessible. Walking is a beginner-friendly activity and doesn't require any special skills to begin. Simply throw on comfortable clothes, lace up your sneakers, and hit the road!

## Low Impact

As we age, we must be mindful of the type of physical activity we engage in and its impact on our joints. Over time, our cartilage gradually wears down, causing an increase in joint pain. Inevitably, our joints become stiffer and less flexible with time, leading to discomfort and even injury if we aren't careful. Low-impact activities like walking, yoga, and water aerobics are great options for aging individuals. Back pain is among seniors' most common injuries, and most back pain injuries are due to high-impact sports. But walking is low impact, and you can go at your own pace, reducing the risk of injury.

## Improves Mood

While we often think of exercise as beneficial to our physical health, it is equally vital to our mental wellbeing! Walking, like all forms of exercise, has been scientifically proven to reduce stress and anxiety and support cognitive function.

Furthermore, walking improves your sleep quality, positively impacting your overall mood. Walking also provides a quiet time to think and reflect, clearing our minds and allowing us to process our thoughts more freely.

## Lowers Blood Pressure

The risk of hypertension, or high blood pressure, heightens with age. While medication is usually the "quick fix", incorporating walks into your daily routine can act as a drug-free approach to lowering blood pressure. Daily exercise also creates a stronger heart that pumps more blood, which helps improve blood pressure.

## Helps Maintain Strong Bones & Improves Balance

Any weight-bearing activity helps promote strong bones, which is especially important for seniors. As we age, the risk of osteoporosis increases significantly, making us more susceptible to frail, brittle bones. This consequently elevates the risk of fractures or broken bones, especially related to falls. Seniors 65 years and older are 25% more likely to fall than their younger peers.

Additional benefits can be located here [Benefits of Walking Daily For Seniors | Active Aging](#)

# Medicare Open Enrollment

## When's the Medicare Open Enrollment Period?

Every year, Medicare's open enrollment period is **October 15 – December 7**.



## What's the Medicare Open Enrollment Period?

Medicare health and drug plans can make changes each year – things like cost, coverage, and what providers and pharmacies are in their networks. October 15 to December 7 is when all people with Medicare can change their Medicare health plans and prescription drug coverage for the following year to better meet their needs.

## How do people know if they need to change plans?

People in a Medicare health or prescription drug plan should always review the materials their plans send them, like the “Evidence of Coverage” (EOC) and “Annual Notice of Change” (ANOC). If their plans are changing, they should make sure their plans will still meet their needs for the following year. If they're satisfied that their current plans will meet their needs for next year and it's still being offered, they don't need to do anything.

## When can people get information about next year's Medicare plans?

Information for next year's plans will be available beginning in October.

## Where can people find Medicare plan information or compare plans?

1-800-MEDICARE or [Medicare.gov](https://www.Medicare.gov).

### Medicare is a health insurance program for:

- People age 65 or older.
- People under age 65 with certain disabilities.
- People of all ages with End-Stage Renal Disease (permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant).

## Caregiver Support Group

The Caregiver Support Group is a monthly group that offers a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges and rewards of providing care for an aging loved one. The meetings will be held virtually for the foreseeable future from noon to 1 p.m.

October's session will be held on Thursday, October 6, 2022, from noon to 1 p.m. Please email Jennifer Main ([famcenter@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:famcenter@vanderbilt.edu)) for Zoom details.



## Learning Session

The Learning Session is a monthly educational meeting to receive valuable information while providing care to your loved one.

This month, Kanah Lewallan, with Vanderbilt School of Nursing, will be speaking on "How to Plan and Coordinate a Family Meeting." Kanah will discuss strategies and communication techniques to have a family meeting. There will be a focus on how to advocate for your loved one and yourself as a caregiver.



October's learning session will be held on Wednesday, October 5, 2022, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Please email Jennifer Main ([famcenter@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:famcenter@vanderbilt.edu)) for Zoom details.

*“A good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures for anything.”  
Irish Proverb*